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New York

President:	Mr. Lewicki/Ms. Wronecka	(Poland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Woldegerima
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisionalrules of procedure, I invite the representative of Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and His Excellency Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Fedotov is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Vienna.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Zerihoun.

Mr. Zerihoun: I am grateful for this opportunity to provide an oral update on the politica' and security situations in Guinea-Bissau and on the country's preparations for elections.

Since the adoption of resolution 2404 (2018), on 28 February, encouraging progress has been made in the efforts to break the political and institutional deadlock that has persisted in Guinea-Bissau for almost three years. As the Security Council is aware, during the extraordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 14 April, President José Mário Vaz of Guinea-Bissau made several key commitments, which have since been fulfilled. Those include the swearing-in of Mr. Aristides Gomes as the consensual Prime Minister, on 16 April, the issuance of a decree on the same day that confirms 18 November as the date for the legislative elections, and the convening of the plenary session of the National Assembly on 19 April, for the first time in more than two years. At its meeting, the Assembly approved the appointment of the President and the Executive Secretariat of the National Electoral Commission and extended the term of the legislature until November.

Since then, with the facilitation of an ECOWAS ministerial delegation, which visited Bissau on 24 April, a new inclusive Government has been sworn in. The new Cabinet, which will be in office until the legislative elections in November, comprises 26 ministers, four of whom are women.

The significant breakthrough was achieved following an agreement reached between the two main political parties, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde and the Party for Social Renewal, with the facilitation of the Catholic Bishop of Bissau. It also owes much to the consistent pressure put by ECOWAS on Bissau-Guinean political stakeholders, which culminated in the imposition of targeted sanctions on individuals deemed to be obstructing efforts to end the impasse, as well as the encouragement and facilitation of United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the other members of the group of five international partners in Bissau, namely, ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). Those encouraging developments pave the way for launching the electoral process and creating openings for other peacebuilding initiatives that have been long stalled because of the impasse.

Nonetheless, several key provisions of the ECOWAS-brokered Conakry Agreement of October 2016 have yet to be implemented. As a crucial next step, the political stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau have initiated discussions that will culminate in the holding of a national round-table dialogue, as provided for in the Conakry Agreement. Both the Government programme and a stability pact, which outline the principles for key reforms until the end of the current term of the legislature, are expected to be endorsed by the political stakeholders following the national round-table dialogue. The primary focus of the first meeting of the new Council of Ministers, on 10 May, was on preparations for the elections. UNIOGBIS will continue efforts, including within the framework of the Guinea-Bissau group of five international partners, to encourage the Government to move forward the convening of the round table and, more broadly, the implementation of the remaining priorities outlined in the Conakry Agreement.

With respect to the legislative elections, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project document on electoral support to the Government, in the amount of $7.7 million, has been finalized. The project will support technical preparations for cartography activities, an update of the voter register, voter education and electoral administration. The Government of Guinea-Bissau has made an unprecedented contribution of $1.8 million to the UNDP basket fund. UNDP has also contributed $200,000 to the fund, which, among other priorities, will allow the UNDP to procure biometric equipment for the electoral technical wing of the Ministry of the Interior. The tender and procurement process for the purchase of the biometric equipment and software will be launched on 21 May, and the National Electoral Commission, which supervises the process, is expected to begin voter registration on 1 June.

Additional resources are urgently needed to fill a funding gap of approximately $5.7 million to cover voter registration and operational costs for the elections. In order to avoid yet another delay in the elections, it will be important for the international community to provide the requisite support to bridge the funding gap.

However, we remain concerned about the drug-trafficking situation and associated forms of transnational organized crime. Since the adoption of resolution 2404 (2018), there have been at least five reported seizures of drugs at the international airport in Bissau, which many fear might be just the tip of the iceberg. It is our hope that ongoing efforts to enhance UNIOGBIS monitoring and reporting capabilities, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other partners, will, in due course, expose the true extent of the problem and contribute to combating impunity.

Also since the adoption of resolution 2404 (2018), steps have been taken by UNIOGBIS, with the support of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, to reorient the resources and interventions of the mission towards the effective implementation of the new priorities articulated by the Security Council. To that end, a DPA-led technical assessment mission — comprised of the relevant United Nations departments and offices — was sent to Bissau for the period from 24 to 31 March. The team met with national, regional and international stakeholders, and worked closely with UNIOGBIS to help realign the mission's resources, and internal work on the reorientation is well under way. It was agreed that resources would be temporarily redeployed from the former rule-of-law and security institutions component to support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in conducting good offices and providing support for the elections, as well as for the newly established component on drug trafficking and organized crime. UNODC will be integrated into that component.

In addition, future United Nations police deployments are expected to focus on criminal detection and investigation, and the promotion of human rights and gender equality will be mainstreamed in all mission activities. The report and recommendations of the technical assessment mission to Bissau will also inform the strategic review mission, which will take place in late August or early September. The strategic review will encompass the Secretary- General's assessment of UNIOGBIS, including options for a possible reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in the country and a reprioritization of tasks, as requested by the Council in resolution 2404 (2018).

The latest successful efforts to assist Bissau-Guinean stakeholders to end the political and institutional impasse and launch the country on the path of sustainable peace and development provide cause for optimism. The period leading up to the legislative elections, and particularly leading up to the next presidential elections, in 2019, will be critical and fraught with uncertainties.

Before concluding, I would like to recognize the commendable contribution of Mr. Modibo Touré, who completed his assignment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on 6 May, particularly his laudable efforts in forging close and constructive relations with ECOWAS and the region. I would also like to welcome his successor, Mr. José Viegas Filho, who will assume his responsibilities later this month and continue to build on progress made in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to express our appreciation to our partners — ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union and the CPLP for their contributions, cooperation and efforts, which have helped open the way for a better future for Guinea Bissau — an opportunity that the people of Guinea-Bissau should be encouraged, assisted and influenced to grasp.

The President: I thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: I would like to thank the Security Council for its continued attention to the threats posed by drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime to peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

As the Council recognized in resolution 2404 (2018), the Government of Guinea-Bissau, the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other partners are working together to address those urgent challenges. That includes support to the transnational crime unit established under the West Africa Coast Initiative, the joint airport interdiction task force under the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) and the trafficking in persons brigade of the judicial police. Since its establishment, the transnational crimes unit has investigated 70 cases of drug trafficking, with 113 persons prosecuted and 71 kilogrammes of cocaine and 1,353 kilogrammes of cannabis seized. Thanks to mentoring under UNODC's AIRCOP at Bissau airport, five passengers attempting to smuggle cocaine were arrested in April. Those are just two examples of the positive impact that capacity-building can have as part of integrated support to strengthen criminal justice responses and promote peace and security. UNODC has developed a technical assistance package for Guinea-Bissau, with clearly identifies areas of intervention.

First, we need to do more to build capacities. We will continue supporting the judicial police and nationally owned inter-service elite units that have been established and proven to be successful, namely, the transnational crime unit and the joint airport interdiction task force. That support for detection and investigative skills should encompass intelligence-gathering and analysis, profiling techniques and the sharing of operational information at national, regional and international levels.

Secondly, we need to help counter-illicit financial flows. UNODC is ready to respond to the request received from Guinea-Bissau's financial intelligence unit to provide technical assistance to fight money laundering and prevent and counter illicit financial flows.

Thirdly, we need to strengthen law enforcement responses to maritime crime. The Bijagós archipelago of 88 islands further exposes Guinea-Bissau to criminal activities due to the difficulties of controlling vast territorial waters.

Transnational organized crime, coupled with a challenging political and security environment, law enforcement capacity gaps and resource constraints, represents a clear threat to Guinea-Bissau, the region and beyond. Combating drug trafficking and dismantling criminal networks clearly requires specialized assistance, and it also requires funds. Despite our intense efforts to mobilize resources, funding for UNODC activities in Guinea-Bissau was drastically reduced in 2017. Our Office must rely solely on project funding, even to carry out urgently needed technical assistance. However, donors remain reluctant to engage in Guinea-Bissau in view of the current political situation.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to urge the international community to enable UNODC and other international agencies to provide the comprehensive support Guinea-Bissau needs to address drug and crime threats, in line with resolution 2404 (2018), to help re-establish momentum towards progress. UNODC remains at the Council's disposal.

The President: I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Vieira.

Mr. Vieira: I would like to thank you, Madam President, for the invitation to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Before starting, I would also like to welcome the appointment of Mr. José Viegas Filho of Brazil as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. Mr. Viegas has more than four decades of experience in public service and diplomacy, and the PBC looks forward to closely working with him. I would also like to thank the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Modibo Touré, for his close collaboration with the PBC and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) during his tenure in Guinea-Bissau.

Since my previous briefing to the Security Council, on 14 February (see S/PV.8182), there have been positive developments in Guinea-Bissau. I will not dwell long on those points, especially after the excellent briefing we received today from the Assistant Secretary-General

for Political Affairs, Mr. Taye-Brook Zerihoun. As we have heard, President José Mário Vaz appointed Aristides Gomes as the new consensual Prime Minister and confirmed that legislative elections would be held on 18 November. Members of the new Government were sworn in on 26 April.

After almost three years of political impasse, an extraordinary plenary session of the Parliament was convened on 19 April, when the National People's Assembly elected new leadership for the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and extended its ninth legislature until November. The appointment of a new Chair of the NEC is indeed an important step, since that was a factor blocking the preparations for the upcoming elections in November. As I informed the Council during my statement in February, that was stressed by many of my interlocutors in Guinea-Bissau last July, when I visited the country.

Let me also add that, on 3 May, the Chair of the organizing committee of the National Conference for Guinea-Bissau on Peace Consolidation and Development, Father Domingos da Fonseca, delivered a report to President José Mario Vaz entitled "In the name of peace". That document was drafted after a long process of national consultations involving more than 3,000 people in the Guinean diaspora and in the country. The paper examines a series of issues related to peacebuilding and aims to contribute to national reconciliation. Preparations for that report began in 2009, and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) provided support to it.

With regard to the PBF, it is worth mentioning that the implementation of its new portfolio for Guinea-Bissau started this year. As I mentioned during my previous briefing, it consists of six projects, totalling $7.3 million, running from January 2018 to June 2019. It aims to contribute through bottom-up peacebuilding approaches, supporting inclusive processes and strengthening the participation of women and youth.

On Monday, 14 May, I convened a meeting of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC to discuss the situation in the country. On that occasion, we received briefings from Mr. David McLachlan-Karr, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau; Mr. Tanou Koné, Permanent Observer of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau; Ambassador Fernando Delfim da Silva of Guinea-Bissau, and Ms. Barrie Freeman, who updated us on the most recent work of the PBSO.

During that very positive meeting, participants expressed support for developments in the country, including the fact that the constitutional framework for free and fair elections would be respected. Members also underlined the engagement of ECOWAS and recognized the effective, preventive and deterrent role of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the importance of ensuring its continuity until the necessary conditions for its withdrawal were fully met, at least until the 2019 presidential elections. The PBC therefore would like to congratulate the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the political actors for the constructive spirit that allowed for the consensus appointment of Prime Minister Aristides Gomes and his Cabinet and the establishment of a date for the legislative elections this year.

I would like to stress, however, the importance of continued support for that positive momentum and to underline the need to move forward on other provisions of the Conakry Agreement, including the adoption of a stability pact. I am sure that the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and key political actors will continue to demonstrate leadership and determination in that direction.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of the region to solve the political impasse in the country. That was made possible due to an exemplary showing of international coordination, which includes the group of five international organizations involved in the peacebuilding process in Guinea-Bissau, that is, ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). The PBC actively participated in these efforts.

All of what I have mentioned speaks to the sustaining peace approach in peacebuilding and the importance of ensuring the coherence of international efforts in support of building and sustaining peace in a country-specific context, with a strong emphasis on inclusiveness and partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, as well as other relevant stakeholders, including civil society. This is also where the added value of the PBC comes into play.

With regard to the electoral process, important challenges ahead include, inter alia, the financing of the elections and the update of the voter registration list. The existing financial challenges must be surmounted in order to allow for the timely preparations for the elections. A project document in support of the elections has been signed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Guinea-Bissau. The total budget of $7.7 million covers technical preparations for mapping, an update of voter registrations and the practical administration of the elections. It is important to underline that the Government of Guinea-Bissau has already made an unprecedented contribution to this basket fund. UNDP has also made contributions. In addition to the ongoing technical assistance the European Union is providing to the Technical Office for Electoral Processes Support, it is also preparing its contribution to the elections support project. However, additional financial resources are still needed. I would therefore once again like to call for the support of the international community for bridging the existing financial gap associated with the process.

I would also like to reiterate to the Council my intention to visit Guinea-Bissau in the coming months, probably in July, to consult with a broad range of stakeholders on how the PBC can further support peacebuilding efforts in the country, especially the upcoming elections. The exact date of the visit will be scheduled in consultations with the local authorities. The visit will allow me to witness at first hand the ongoing preparations for the legislative elections. On my return, I intend to convene a PBC meeting to discuss the process. I would also like to reiterate my disposition to share the findings with the members of the Security Council.

The Guinea-Bissau configuration will continue to be actively engaged in following the situation in Guinea-Bissau and in providing support for the country through different initiatives. All efforts must be made to encourage the international community to demonstrate renewed confidence in Guinea-Bissau now that the political impasse has been addressed.

Finally, I would like to remind the Security Council that Brazil is currently the Chair of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. As was done when I previously briefed the Council, the members of the CPLP have endorsed my remarks and recommendations.

The President: I thank Mr. Vieira for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for their excellent briefings. I would also like to welcome the participation in this meeting of Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. José Viegas Filho on his appointment as Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), as well as to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Modibo Touré, for his outstanding work as head of the Office.

Since the adoption of resolution 2404 (2018), on 28 February 2018, on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, encouraging information from the country marks a real break with the previous situation, which was characterized in particular by an institutional and political deadlock. Indeed, on the basis of frank dialogue and quiet consultations, political actors in Guinea-Bissau, including President José Mário Vaz, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde and the Party for Social Renewal, seem resolutely committed to work together to lead their country on the road to lasting peace.

At this point, I would like to congratulate all stakeholders, including civil society and religious leaders, and encourage them to continue those efforts, with a view to a better future for Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister, Mr. Aristides Gomes, the setting of the date for the parliamentary elections, on 18 November 2018, the reopening and functioning of the Parliament, as well as the formation of an inclusive Government, on 25 April 2018, are proof of this new impetus, which is certainly fragile, but which brings hope. These various acts, which lay the foundations for a peaceful end to the crisis, are the result of the progress made in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement of 14 October 2016, which remains the only consensual framework that should make it possible to find a lasting solution to the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

However, despite theose positive signs, the enormous challenges ahead require the continued support and assistance of the international community, in order to overcome the obstacles to a definitive peace in Guinea-Bissau. These are the next stages of the Conakry Agreement, namely, the organization of a round table for national dialogue, the signing of a stability pact and the preparations for parliamentary elections. In that regard, the clear priority objectives assigned to UNIOGBIS by resolution 2404 (2018), particularly with regard to elections, should be taken into account. My country would therefore like to appeal to donors and the international community to create the technical conditions necessary for the organization of open, fair and credible legislative elections. In addition, cooperation between UNIOGBIS and regional organizations, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and international partners, should continue to help stabilize the country.

One of the major challenges facing Guinea-Bissau relates to security issues, both within the country and at its borders. Meeting this challenge requires the updating of relevant legislation and national mechanisms to combat transnational organized crime more effectively, including drug trafficking and money-laundering, which threaten the security and stability of Guinea-Bissau and the subregion. With this in mind, the Security Council, through its resolution 2404 (2018), encourages greater involvement by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in order to vigorously combat these scourges.

In that regard, my country would like to recall, particularly in the framework of UNODC-ECOWAS cooperation, the existence of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for West Africa for the period 2016-2020, the implementation of which aims to contribute, inter alia, to the reduction of drug addiction, drug trafficking and crime in the subregion. It is important to bear in mind that poor management of the security issue could have a negative impact on the ongoing political process.

In that perspective, we believe it is essential to provide UNODC with the necessary means to fulfil its mission, in order to contribute to a successful way out of the crisis. Ultimately, only the ownership by Guinea-Bissau's political stakeholders of their own destiny and the continued support of international partners will enable Guinea-Bissau to recover peace, a guarantee of its economic and social development.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the convening of today's briefing and thanks Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General, for the very important information he has provided. We also thank Ambassador Mauro Vieira for his significant and strenuous efforts to carry out the duties entrusted to him last year. We welcome the appointment of Mr. José Viegas Filho as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). We would also like to again congratulate former Special Representative Mr. Modibo Touré on his initiatives and constant cooperation with the Security Council during his two-year tenure.

After nearly three years of a political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau, the Security Council and the international community have a reason to be optimistic. Recent positive developments in the country provide a logical explanation for the encouraging environment. On 16 April, President José Mário Vaz conveyed hope to his people, the friends of Guinea-Bissau and the international community by appointing Mr. Aristide Gomes as consensus Prime Minister. The appointment of Mr. Gomes to that important State post was the result of long negotiations supported primarily by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, which enabled the main political parties to reach a firm consensus. A few days later, UNIOGBIS endorsed the overwhelming approval of civil society and of the people in general with regard to the appointment of such an experienced politician.

With regard to the recently formed inclusive Government, although it is indeed true that the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde and the Party for Social Renewal control the majority of Government portfolios, the real surprise in the Government's composition is the fact that the leaders of three other parties — the President of the Union for Change, the President of the Democratic Convergence Party and the President of the New Democracy Party — were allocated seats in Parliament, which demonstrates the Government's inclusive nature. The main goal of the new Government team, which should achieve tangible results in a relatively short time, is to guarantee smooth, transparent and inclusive legislative elections on 18 November. To that end, it is vital that the necessary $7.7 million be made available to the

electoral fund as soon as possible. The Government and the United Nations Development Programme agreed to that fund to be able to proceed with the electoral census update and to establish a new mapping division so that the Government and the new management team of the National Electoral Commission can have the technical means to hold successful elections in a peaceful and calm environment.

Peacebuilding and the consolidation of political and institutional progress require much more than organizing elections. The Conakry Agreement also demands other kinds of conclusive reforms, such as a review of the Constitution, the signing of a stability pact, electoral law reform, political party law reform, including public financing, and defence, security and justice sector reform and the drafting of the fresh start development plan according to the Terra Ranca vision. Prospects for development are vital to enable the country to return to the path of economic development. We acknowledge and are grateful for the donations already being made, and we congratulate the Government of Guinea-Bissau for making an initial contribution of $1.8 million. We call upon donors, the main international financial institutions and Guinea-Bissau's traditional and non-traditional donors to make their contributions in order to move the process forward.

It is important that such development occurs within the context of regional development. As expressed by the African Union Commission in its communiqué of 2 May, we would like to encourage the new authorities and all interested parties in Guinea-Bissau to work closely within the framework of the country's democratic institutions and take urgent and sustainable steps to address current challenges as soon as possible in order to ensure lasting stability in the country. The examples of Liberia and Sierra Leone clearly demonstrate that, with effort, political will, solidarity, coordination and international assistance, a peaceful and lasting solution can be found to the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

In conclusion, we congratulate and pay tribute to regional institutions — the ECOWAS and the African Union — on the tremendous efforts and considerable progress they have made to resolve the political and institutional impasse. It is also important to acknowledge the involvement and efforts of the European Union, the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. It is essential that group of international actors remain committed to providing assistance to Guinea-Bissau in the post-election period and helping it to develop a budget to achieve its economic goals. I would like especially to thank and congratulate Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for his support to the Government of Guinea-Bissau to curb drug trafficking.

In our capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau, we are considering a trip to the country at the end of June to begin to take stock of the progress made and of the status of the current sanctions imposed on military leaders who carried out the coup d'état on 12 April 2012.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): May I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Zerihoun and Ambassador Vieira for their briefings. Although he has left us because of technical difficulties, I would also like to thank the Executive Director Fedotov for his briefing. It was important to hear from him given the specific threat of organized crime in Guinea-Bissau.

Like others who have spoken so far, the United Kingdom welcomes the recent progress seen in Guinea-Bissau. That progress has been considerable. A consensus Prime Minister after some months of difficulty, a date for legislative elections and the formation of an inclusive Government are all signs that good sense and consideration for Guinea-Bissau's stability have trumped narrow political interests. However, I think that we must all witness continued progress before we are convinced that the current reality is really a new reality. We need Guinea-Bissau's leaders to stick to their political agreement. It is an agreement for their country's future and for their people's future, and it must not be held hostage to personal disputes.

We need unity behind preparations for elections, which are now only six months away. We also need unified steps towards political and constitutional reform in line with the concrete commitments made in Conakry. We have already seen how civil society, whether religious leaders or women mediators, have acted in the country's long-term interests. We would urge Guinea-Bissau's leaders to create opportunities for their meaningful participation in the political processes. We in the Council know that inclusive political settlements are those that last.

It is clear we would not be discussing progress in Guinea-Bissau without the patient leadership shown by the Economic Community of West African

States (ECOWAS). We urge ECOWAS to continue its engagement to see the political crisis through and, in return, we in the Council must remain united in our support for ECOWAS and all of the impressive things it has been doing.

In February, the Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), with a narrower focus on good offices. While the situation on the ground has changed, the mandate remains just as, if not more, relevant. In the short term, the priorities must be consolidating the political settlement and delivering the elections. Continued good-offices support will be required in the medium term to see through political reforms. We also welcome the deepening focus on transnational organized crime and illicit drugs, which are security threats not only for the country but for the region and the international community at large.

We welcome warmly Ambassador Vieira's briefing and agree with him on the importance of the sustaining peace approach. Given a changed political environment on the ground and a refreshed mandate, the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Viegas Filho, is timely and welcome. He has an opportunity to bring renewed direction and drive to refocusing and slimming down UNIOGBIS as per the February mandate and delivering on the priority tasks at hand.

But let me in the same vein offer the sincere thanks of the United Kingdom to former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Modibo Touré. Despite the obstacles that UNIOGBIS has faced, he demonstrated genuine commitment to Guinea-Bissau through to the end of his term and helped deliver the positive progress that we are discussing today.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): I, too, would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zerihoun and Ambassador Vieira for their briefings today, and, although Executive Director Fedotov has left us, we want to express appreciation for the renewed vigour that he has to counter narcotics trafficking and transnational organized crime in Guinea-Bissau. I also join others in welcoming the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Filho, as he acquaints himself with his new portfolio. We very much look forward to working with him and wish to express appreciation to his predecessor, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Modibo Touré, for his service and passion to bring about positive change in the lives of the people of Guinea-Bissau.

The United States is encouraged by the consensus appointment and swearing in of Prime Minister Aristides Gomes as well as President Vaz's renewed commitment to implementing the Conakry Agreement. While we are hopeful that these latest political developments signal a positive turn for Guinea-Bissau, past experience reminds us to remain cautious. Vigilance is still needed from all stakeholders to ensure fulfilment of the commitments made by the country's leadership. The people of Guinea-Bissau deserve as much, and the Council demands as much. We urge President Vaz, Prime Minister Gomes, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde leader Pereira and others to follow through on fostering unity, implementing the Conakry Agreement and preparing the nation for the long-overdue parliamentary elections this November.

Following the swift installation of an inclusive Government, we call on its members to focus on creating a programme of work and achieving service delivery to show that they are serious about serving the people who put them in power. In all these endeavours, we encourage the inclusion of civil-society and women's groups. We applaud the influential engagement of the Women's Forum for Peace and the national women's council and look forward to the national forum of women and girls for peace, scheduled in Bissau for later this month.

As Guinea-Bissau finally sets out towards newly scheduled November legislative elections, we look forward to a free, fair and transparent poll. We encourage all of Guinea-Bissau's partners in the region and the international community to find ways to support the Government's efforts to prepare for and execute the elections, including through financial support.

Narcotics trafficking and transnational organized crime destroy lives at all ends of the geographic spectrum. We genuinely appreciate the work that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has done in Guinea-Bissau, work that we perceive as having had a positive impact, reducing drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. The establishment of the Transnational Crime Unit in Bissau, under the auspices of the West Africa Coast Initiative, served as a powerful tool integrating efforts across the region to combat trafficking.

We were glad to learn that the 20 suspended members of the Unit had been reinstated and were heartened by the recent string of drug seizures at Bissau airport in April. We hope to see more such concrete results, with full investigations and accountability supported by the Government and the security services, no matter where the trail leads. However, in order to continue to see impact, we wish to see the return of UNODC staff to Bissau. We will work with our Council colleagues, the Secretariat and UNODC to find a way to make that happen.

We once again salute the activism of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including its February imposition of sanctions on spoilers of the Conakry Agreement and all its forward-leaning efforts to foster enduring solutions to Guinea-Bissau's crisis and the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Conakry Agreement.

As I stated in February (see S/PV.8194), we believe that the adoption of resolution 2404 (2018), renewing the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), will bring real improvement to the mission, allowing it to focus on putting an end to the stalemate. Only two months later, we have seen a concrete political process, and we expect to see a mission focused on political solutions and employing its good offices working in concert with ECOWAS. We appreciate the continued implementation of resolution 2404 (2018) as it was adopted in determining the mission's mandated tasks, size and budget.

We are also encouraged by the positive events of the last month but acknowledge that Guinea-Bissau has a long road left to travel. Its people will encounter many challenges on that road, but obstructionist, intransigent and selfish leaders should not be one of them. Leaders have now shown willingness to take some steps in seemingly good faith. We will anxiously track their progress in the weeks and months to come as they implement the Conakry Agreement, foster unity, deliver services to the people of Guinea-Bissau, fight corruption and transnational organized crime, and prepare the nation for elections in November.

Mr. Vaverka (Sweden): I join others in thanking Assistant-Secretary-General Zerihoun and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Executive Director Fedotov for their useful briefings today. I would also like to thank Ambassador Mauro Vieira, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his important contribution to today's discussion.

Since we last met in this Chamber to discuss Guinea-Bissau, there have been a number of positive developments. We welcome the appointment of Aristides Gomes as Prime Minister on 16 April as well as the formation of an inclusive Government on 25 April. These are both important steps in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and preconditions for holding free, fair and democratic elections. We are optimistic that these new developments can help pave the way for a lasting resolution to the political crisis in the country.

We commend the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and regional mediation in Guinea-Bissau, which has once again shown how regional efforts can resolve political deadlock and disputes and prevent conflict.

In this context, let me pay particular tribute to the President of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, President Faure Gnassingbé of Togo, and the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, President Alpha Condé of the Republic of Guinea, for their role.

All stakeholders must now work towards conducting timely and credible elections on 18 November and the further implementation of the Conakry Agreement. Regarding elections, it is essential that the funding gap for voter registration and the organization of the elections be addressed. The ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau will also have an important role in the run-up to the forthcoming elections.

We welcome the reconfiguration of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, José Viegas Filho. We congratulate him on his appointment and look forward to working closely with him.

Despite the recent progress made, real challenges remain that will need to be addressed, and the good-offices function of the Special Representative will be crucial going forward. In addition, we welcome strategic and results-oriented reporting from UNIOGBIS, so that the Security Council can fully play its role by making decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of the situation on the ground and how it can best support the country. This is all the more

important as the situation within the country remains fragile. The current fragility could be exacerbated by the economic situation. We note that this year's cashew harvest seems to be lower than last year's. For that reason, we believe it would be important that a risk assessment and/or conflict analysis be carried out. The Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play in convening actors and contributing to an analysis of threats and challenges. We welcome the Chair's upcoming visit in July and look forward to him briefing the Council again at the appropriate time. The six-point road map and the Conakry Agreement remain relevant and represent the only legitimate way forward. They must be implemented in full.

Looking forward, in order to target the root causes of the conflict in Guinea-Bissau, it would be important to focus on reconciliation and political dialogue and on strengthening the rule of law through strong and inclusive institutions, which are important drivers of peace. We encourage greater support for the active participation of women in the peace and political processes, especially in the context of the elections. Ensuring women's full involvement in building Guinea-Bissau's future will be an important prerequisite for lasting peace and stability in the country.

Recent months have seen important progress in Guinea-Bissau. The momentum must be seized, and all parties must work together towards the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the preparation of inclusive elections. We stand ready to support them and their efforts.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting and appreciates the important briefings of the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun; the Ambassador of Brazil, Mr. Mauro Vieira, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

I would like to start by highlighting the recent progress made in Guinea-Bissau following the adoption of resolution 2404 (2018). Peru welcomes the appointment of Mr. Aristides Gomes as Prime Minister, which was the result of consensus among all parties in accordance with the provisions of the Conakry Agreement. We look forward to the legislative elections scheduled for 18 November, and we note that the National Assembly was able to meet for the first time since 2016. Those developments should allow for progress in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, the fundamental framework for resolving the country's political crisis. In that respect, we would like to refer to three specific aspects that we believe require urgent work in order to achieve sustainable peace in Guinea-Bissau.

The first aspect concerns free and fair elections. We believe that successful legislative elections this year will favour the normal development of the 2019 presidential elections. That implies promoting citizen participation on a large scale, particularly women and young people, in an inclusive and transparent process. We welcome the fact that the National Assembly has appointed the four members of the National Electoral Commission, including its Chair. However, we underline the need to adequately finance the process and have the necessary equipment and logistical capabilities. We therefore support the work that the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) has been doing in terms of mediation, providing good offices and supporting the organization of elections. We welcome the support of the United Nations Development Programme, and we note the need for the international community to continue cooperating.

Secondly, it is necessary to improve security and access to justice. We are especially concerned about the vulnerability of Guinea-Bissau to threats such as drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, which undermine institutions and the social fabric. It is important to prevent terrorist groups in the region from establishing links with those scourges. We therefore consider it important to strengthen institutional capacities, particularly in the area of security and justice, and to promote greater cooperation by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime with UNIOGBIS in order to support national efforts in those areas.

The third point concerns the construction of a prosperous, peaceful and inclusive society. It is necessary to address the root causes of conflict, especially when the majority of the population lives in a situation of poverty and vulnerability. That situation could be aggravated by a decrease in cashew production, the main export. In that regard, we emphasize the need to guarantee predictability and stability in the financing that the Peacebuilding Fund devotes to support the efforts of Guinea-Bissau to allow its population access

to basic education, health and justice services, among others. We encourage that the projects promoted by the Peacebuilding Commission prioritize the sustainable development of the country and that they empower women and youth. We highlight the importance of that work being appropriately coordinated with UNIOGBIS, the United Nations country team and civil society.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight the important mediation role played by the Economic Community of West African States, as well as that of the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union, among other international actors committed to peace in Guinea-Bissau. We also recognize the work of Mr. Modibo Touré as Head of UNIOGBIS and welcome the appointment of Mr. José Viegas Filho, the new Special Representative of the Secretary General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of said Office, whose professional qualities are widely recognized.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Mauro Vieira, Ambassador of Brazil; Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs; and Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for their insightful briefings on the political and security situation in Guinea-Bissau. France is very grateful for their respective activities, which occurred alongside the resumption of dialogue between the Guinea-Bissau parties following the October 2016 Conakry Agreement. I would like to touch on three points that have already been highlighted by previous speakers.

First, I wish to reiterate France's full support for the appointment by President José Mario Vaz of Aristides Gomes as consensual Prime Minister. A year and a half after the Conakry Agreement, this appointment attests to the will of the parties to break out of the political impasse. France also welcomes the formation by Prime Minister Gomes of an inclusive Government, whose main undertaking will be to create the political and institutional conditions necessary for the holding of parliamentary elections in November.

Secondly, those recent political developments, which we had hoped for, reflect the coordinated actions of the international community and regional organizations to resolve the Guinea-Bissau crisis. In that respect, I reiterate France's full support for the initiatives of regional organizations, particularly the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose role has been crucial. It was in the aftermath of the extraordinary session of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS on Guinea-Bissau that President Vaz appointed Aristides Gomes as Prime Minister. We are convinced that the solution to the conflict will be given pride of place through consultation and engagement with local actors. In that respect, the group of five partners of Guinea-Bissau, mentioned by Ambassador Vieira, constitutes a propitious coordination platform that should be maintained and supported.

Thirdly, it is crucial that the commitment of the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and international donors support the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), as well as those of UNODC, whose role is essential in creating a healthy environment that is conducive to lasting political stabilization. The recent history of the country calls for subdued optimism in the face of recent progress. It is therefore particularly important that we collectively send the right message, one of vigilance and continued commitment, following the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister.

The new UNIOGBIS mandate in resolution 2404 (2018) should help support the priority areas for the resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, namely, the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, adherence to the expected time frame for the electoral cycle and carrying out the process of reviewing the Constitution. In that regard, I wish to express our best wishes to the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and express our appreciation for his predecessor.

Finally, the inclusion of women in the crisis-resolution process, specifically through the Network of Women Mediators that has been set up, is also an important element that will promote ongoing dialogue among local parties. To find a lasting solution in Guinea-Bissau, we need an inclusive process supported by all. Failure would be destabilizing, and we cannot permit that.

Mr. Woldegerima (Ethiopia): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun for his briefing on the latest developments in Guinea-Bissau. We are also grateful to Executive Director Fedotov for his remarks via video-teleconference, and we commend the work that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is doing in the fight against

drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. We also appreciate the briefing by the Chair of the configuration for Guinea-Bissau of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), including on the outcome of its latest meeting. We commend the configuration's active and continued engagement in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Guinea-Bissau. We note the Chair's intention to visit the country and look forward to hearing his impressions when he returns. We also join others in welcoming the appointment of Mr. José Vegas Filho of Brazil as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), and we thank former Special Representative Modibo Touré for his dedicated service.

As indicated in the briefings we have just heard, there have been positive developments in Guinea-Bissau, and we would like to echo the words of our African colleagues from Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea. After the institutional paralysis of the past three years, President José Mário Vaz's appointment of Aristide Gomes as a consensus Prime Minister, following consultations with political stakeholders and civil society, is indeed a step in the right direction. The decision regarding the holding of parliamentary elections, the reopening of Parliament and the swearing-in of the new Cabinet are also encouraging. Those and other positive developments have certainly rekindled a sense of hope and optimism, and we very much welcome them. We would like to congratulate the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the political actors for their constructive engagement, which has led to this breakthrough.

The role played by the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) in resolving the institutional paralysis is indeed commendable, and it is testament to the significant contribution that regional and subregional organizations can make in resolving conflict and crisis situations in their immediate neighbourhood, in close coordination with other international stakeholders. Of course, we cannot lose sight of the challenges that remain, and we hope that the positive momentum we are seeing will be maintained.

The centrality of the Conakry Agreement to sustaining peace, security and development in Guinea-Bissau cannot be overemphasized, and we hope all stakeholders in the country will respect and comply with the Agreement in addressing their differences and the challenges facing their country. The sustained engagement of the international community will unquestionably be vital to creating an environment conducive to holding peaceful and credible elections, as well as filling in the country's financial gaps. The continued support of UNIOGBIS and the PBC configuration will also be very important in that regard.

Finally, we believe that concerted efforts on the part of ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and other relevant partners will continue to be essential to realizing a lasting solution in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to sincerely thank Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Mr. Mauro Vieira, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their valuable briefings.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. José Vegas Filho, on assuming his new position. We wish him success in that role and assure him of our full support. I should also like to thank the outgoing Special Representative, Mr. Modibo Touré, for his achievements. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

A year and a half has passed since the signing of the Conakry Agreement, and we are pleased to see practical, positive steps being taken by all parties towards establishing an environment conducive to the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Agreement. In that regard, we welcome the decision by President José Mário Vaz to select a consensus Prime Minister, form an inclusive Government and set November as the date for legislative elections. We urge all the parties concerned to continue with that constructive approach and pursue implementation of the outstanding provisions of the Agreement.

With regard to the parliamentary elections, we urge the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau to provide the necessary support for holding the elections pursuant to its mandate under resolution 2404 (2018), ensure that all sectors of society participate in the election process and monitor the situation closely to prevent any incidents that could undermine the process. We welcome the continued

efforts by the Peacebuilding Commission to mobilize funding in support of the election process, which now amounts to $7.7 million.

It would be remiss of me not to commend the efforts of regional and international organizations working in Guinea-Bissau to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries have made great efforts with all stakeholders to implement a number of the provisions in the Agreement, especially in the light of regional conflict-resolution initiatives.

We welcome the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission to support the roles of women and civil society. We also commend UNODC's role in fighting drug-trafficking and organized crime.

The recent positive developments in Guinea-Bissau have been made possible by the work done by regional organizations to enhance progress on the ground. That requires the Security Council's support. We call on ECOWAS to continue its efforts in this area. We are now looking forward to seeing the national conference on constitutional reform provided for in the Conakry Agreement held at the end of the year.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): The Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to express sincere thanks to Assistant Secretary-General Zerihoun, Mr. Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission configuration, Ambassador Vieira, for their briefings on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Special Representative Touré for his hard work in Guinea-Bissau and warmly welcome the incoming Special Representative, Mr. Filho, to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) team. We also commend the important work of UNODC on the ground, particularly in the light of the new mandate stipulated in resolution 2404 (2018), and we look forward to working closely with UNIOGBIS as the situation in Guinea-Bissau continues to improve.

Regarding the situation in Guinea-Bissau and the implementation of resolution 2404 (2018), I would like to focus on three aspects: the positive developments on the ground in Guinea-Bissau; the importance of supporting regional efforts, particularly by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and the importance of the continued engagement of the Security Council.

First, we would like once again to welcome the developments on the ground in Guinea-Bissau. The appointment of a consensus Prime Minister, the formation of an inclusive Government and the setting of a concrete date for legislative elections are positive steps. Those steps show the goodwill of the key political actors in Guinea-Bissau and create space for UNIOGBIS to work on its mandate, with a Government and Parliament that are functioning.

We would like to highlight the critical role played by women's organizations in breaking the political impasse in Guinea-Bissau, and to reiterate that their full and equal participation in Guinea-Bissau is key. We encourage the Guinea-Bissau Government to continue to engage with women in all steps and at all levels of the political process.

It is important that the Government, the President and the other political actors continue to work towards organizing free and fair legislative elections on 18 November and presidential elections next year. Moving forward, it is essential to restore faith in democratic institutions and work towards national reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau.

That brings me to my second point, namely, support for the region. Five key political organizations — UNIOGBIS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union, the African Union and particularly ECOWAS, also known as the P-5 — play an important role in Guinea-Bissau. It is important that the Security Council continue to support the active engagement of ECOWAS and the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the strong collaboration among ECOWAS, UNIOGBIS and the rest of the P-5 in moving forward. We cannot underestimate the role that ECOWAS played in breaking through the political impasse. It will be vital that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General continue to support ECOWAS and to stimulate that collaboration in the coming months, particularly in the light of the organization of the elections.

I come to my third point. There is no room for complacency on the issue of Guinea-Bissau. The Security Council must remain engaged. While the

recent developments in Guinea-Bissau are positive, we must not lose sight of the importance of the full implementation of the Bissau six-point road map and the Conakry Agreement. While welcoming the positive developments, we must also shed light, when necessary, on the issues that concern us, such as the appointment of the new Minister of State Botché Candé by President Vaz. Botché Candé is on the ECOWAS sanctions list, and his appointment serves as a reminder that, while the political situation has improved, the situation in Guinea-Bissau is still fragile.

Those political improvements may be short-lived if the underlying structural issues are not addressed. The new Government is tasked with building a Government programme that supports national unity. It is key that the stakeholders of Guinea-Bissau be able to move past the political impasse.

In conclusion, we urge the political actors and the P-5 on the ground to continue to work towards supporting the inclusive Government in Guinea-Bissau, the organization of free and fair presidential elections and the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the Bissau six-point road map. The continued engagement of the Security Council will remain essential in moving forward.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Mr. Fedotov and Ambassador Vieira for their briefings.

China commends the recent progress in the political process in Guinea-Bissau and the start of the implementation of the Conakry Agreement by the various parties in the country. Regional and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), played an important role in mediation and good offices in resolving the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau, which China appreciates. China calls on international donors and partners to provide bilateral and multilateral cooperation so as to continue to support the country in its efforts to strengthen State capacity and to improve the lives of its people.

We hope that the United Nations country team, the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will provide targeted assistance to the country, given its needs.

China supports African countries in providing African solutions to African problems. They should work alongside the international community, including ECOWAS, together with UNIOGBIS and the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Filho, in order to promote dialogue and communication among the various stakeholders in Guinea-Bissua, to preserve stability and lasting development in Guinea-Bissau and West Africa and to play a constructive role in that regard.

Mr. Temenov (Kazakhstan): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Zerihoun, Mr. Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Ambassador Vieira for their insightful briefings on the latest developments in Guinea-Bissau.

Kazakhstan welcomes the recent encouraging steps by all parties to end the protracted political stalemate in Guinea-Bissau. It is heartening to note the appointment of Prime Minister Gomes by consensus, the formation of an inclusive Government and the agreement to hold legislative elections on 18 November.

We would like to congratulate the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Viegas Filho, on his appointment, and we wish him every success. We extend our full support for his commitment to facilitating a political solution to the crisis. We join others in expressing our deep appreciation to the former Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Mr. Modibo Touré, for his dedicated service.

We also commend the mediation efforts undertaken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) under the leadership of Presidents Faure Gnassingbé of Togo and Alpha Condé of Guinea. We acknowledge the efforts of the members of the Guinea-Bissau group of five international organizations. We believe that all of those measures have significantly contributed to the recent positive developments and are steps in the right direction. We welcome the decision to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau until 30 June, given that the Mission plays a crucial role in contributing to stability in Guinea-Bissau. We therefore hope for the further extension of the Mission's mandate.

Expeditious preparations for the elections are now necessary. It is clear that international partners must come together to provide the necessary technical, logistical and financial support for the electoral process.

Using that constructive momentum, we call on all parties to promptly take the necessary steps to implement the other outstanding provisions of the Conakry Agreement, including the constitutional review and the adoption of a stability pact. Other matters of concern that must be given urgent attention by all of us are drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. National engagement is critical to implementing the various international programmes and projects aimed at strengthening the security, judicial and law enforcement sectors. We therefore support the technical assistance package for Guinea-Bissau developed by UNODC. We call on the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to continue to strengthen cooperation with UNIOGBIS, UNODC and INTERPOL in those areas.

In addition to such steps, the most effective measures must be sought to ensure the country's stability and resilience by increased support for the existing development plans and the United Nations peacebuilding strategy, with a special focus on education and health care. Ensuring the participation of women and youth in the political process at every stage and at all levels is equally important. We call on all donors to provide the necessary funds for implementing all such measures.

We welcome the plans of Ambassador Mauro Vieira and of Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau, to visit the country. That will further contribute to improved dialogue among the parties. We reaffirm our readiness to work closely with all the relevant parties to support peacebuilding and consolidation efforts in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the information provided by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov, and Ambassador Mauro Vieira in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is almost three years since the beginning of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, which had to do with the adverse political context. Today we have great expectations as we see the country's difficulties being overcome, thanks to the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister through a compromise deal that has revitalized the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, which remains the basic framework for a peaceful settlement of the crisis and the quest for lasting and sustainable peace. We are also closely watching the development and adoption of a Government programme that will help to establish the Government's parameters and structure.

We once again call for consolidating those accords, which will enable all stakeholders to continue to advance the implementation of a lasting political and social settlement based solely on the best interests of the people of Guinea-Bissau in strict respect for their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. In that regard, we believe that within the framework of the road map of 10 September 2016, inclusive dialogue must continue to be one of the main tools for enabling the holding of elections to the legislature during the current Administration and presidential elections in 2019.

Despite the far-reaching implications of the political progress that has been made, Guinea-Bissau is facing various challenges that must be dealt with as effectively as possible. First, in the short term, both the Government and the Parliament are in need of technical and financial support so that they can begin registering voters and consolidating the mechanisms needed for holding the parliamentary elections. Cooperation among the relevant regional and subregional organizations is essential to that, and we therefore acknowledge the major efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Mission in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the contributions of the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, and the important work of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) aimed at bringing together the parties to the conflict and encouraging dialogue.

We welcome the efforts and outstanding work of former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Modibo Touré, whom we wish every success in his future assignments. We also welcome the appointment of the new Special Representative and Head of UNIOGBIS, Mr. José Viegas Filho, who we are confident will perform his duties with the utmost professionalism. We believe that the work of UNIOGBIS must be strengthened and focused on initiatives that will continue to provide opportunities

for dialogue. We are sure that such factors will help to form an inclusive Government and consolidate the upcoming electoral processes.

With regard to the work of UNIOGBIS, we are eagerly awaiting the strategic review of the mission and its proposed reconfiguration. We also commend the work of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, ably chaired by Brazil, and we emphasize the importance of strengthening links related to cooperation and information-sharing between the mission and the Security Council. We also encourage the initiative of the Women's Leadership Forum on Peace. In Guinea-Bissau, the work that women are doing in the quest for a political solution shows how essential a gender perspective and female participation in mediation and dialogue are.

With regard to the stabilization of the country and security matters, combating drug trafficking and transnational crime must continue to be a priority. The role of the United Nations through the country team and the United Nations Development Programme must be an integral part of fostering development and reinforcing the rule of law, with the goal of decreasing exposure to drugs and crime by strengthening the various components of the justice system. The international community must also provide Guinea-Bissau with the assistance needed to improve its control of its coasts and airspace and to train the police to investigate organized crime and drug-trafficking activities.

In conclusion, we want to emphasize the progress that has been made so far through synergies between all the parties. We reiterate once again that in times of political, institutional and social crisis, ensuring the well-being of the population, especially the most vulnerable sectors, must be the overriding interest guiding our efforts to achieve definitive stabilization in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brook Zerihoun; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their informative briefings. We also welcome the appointment of Mr. José Viegas Filho as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and wish him success in his work.

We note the significant progress that has been made in resolving the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau since the appointment of Prime Minister Aristides Gomes by President José Mário Vaz in early April. We welcome the formation of a consensus Government, whose members, we understand, are acceptable to all the main political forces in Guinea-Bissau. We support the work of the country's leadership in preparing for the parliamentary elections scheduled for November. We expect the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to provide effective support for the electoral processes, in line with its mandate established pursuant to resolution 2404 (2018). We have taken note of the plans to convene a national assembly on issues related to a review of the Constitution in the near future. We believe that will be extremely important from the point of view of formulating proposals for reforming the country's founding laws and avoid any future repetition of the current political turbulence. We note with satisfaction UNIOGBIS's efforts supporting the authorities in preparing the assembly.

We would like to draw special attention to the importance of combating transnational crime and drug trafficking in the region. The efforts that Mr. Fedotov spoke about deserve our full support.

We would like to thank the Economic Community of West African States for promoting a political settlement of the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau. At the same time, we believe that any agreements concerning the country's future and its arrangements should be based on the aspirations of its citizens themselves, without any pressure or the imposition of ready-made solutions from the outside. Responding to truly national interests is the only way that they can play a positive role in the country's ability to emerge from a prolonged crisis.

The President: I will now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Poland.

I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun and Ambassador Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their very informative briefings on the recent developments in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to thank Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for his comprehensive analysis.

Poland welcomes the recent positive developments in Guinea-Bissau following the Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held in Lomé on 14 April. The appointment of an inclusive Government, headed by consensus Prime Minister, Mr. Aristides Gomes, the reopening of the National Assembly, the election of the President of the National Electoral Commission and the announcement of parliamentary elections to be held in November constitute major steps to ending the political impasse and successfully implementing the Conakry Agreement.

Against that backdrop, drug trafficking and organized crime continue to represent grave threats to peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, we call on the political leaders and State institutions to combat those crimes in cooperation with UNODC, ECOWAS and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

Finally, we commend the role played by the President of the ECOWAS Authority, President Faure Gnassingbé of Togo, and the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, President Alpha Condé of the Republic of Guinea, as well as other regional and international facilitators in resolving the political crisis. Last but not least, let me express our full support to the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Viegas Filho. Let me also express our sincere gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Modibo Touré, for his efforts aimed at resolving the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Silva (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for inviting me to the Security Council and for giving me the floor.

Eighteen months after the signing of the Conakry Agreement, my country finally has a consensual Prime Minister. Since 25 April, Guinea-Bissau now has an inclusive Government. I have the great pleasure of thanking all of the Council members for their patience, efforts and solidarity. I would like to express my gratitude to the Security Council, the Economic Community of West African States and Ambassador Mauro Vieira.

Our inclusive Government has the great challenge of preparing the upcoming legislative elections, scheduled for 18 November. The Conakry Agreement also requires that a number of institutional reforms be carried out. Why? It is not enough to just conduct successful elections to automatically consolidate the institutional stability of our democratic rule of law.

To give Council members a more accurate picture of our lengthy institutional crisis, I wish to recall here that over the past 24 years of our pluralistic democracy, Guinea-Bissau has had five legislative elections, suffered a civil war and was shaken by two coups d'état. The current Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, is the twentieth person to occupy that post. All that clearly demonstrates that it is not enough to hold successful elections to consolidate democratic institutions. To achieve all the goals enshrined in the Conakry Agreement, the inclusive Government and Parliament will need the participation of the international community — for example, in the area of technical assistance.

Guinea-Bissau needs the support of the Council to conduct universal, participatory, transparent, free and fair elections. In spite of our domestic financial efforts, which have, and will continue, to come from the State budget, the Government will need financial assistance to cover the inherent costs, including sound technical preparation of the elections. In that regard, I would point to the urgency of updating the voter registration rules, especially regarding the registration of new voters, namely, the thousands of young people who have reached voting age since the last elections, in 2014.

In the new political framework, we will continue to count on the patience and solidarity of the members of the Council. Most important for us is that fact that now we can build up our central public institutions and, finally, move towards a recovered constitutional order through the re-established political dialogue.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish every success to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in my country, Mr. José Viegas Filho. The appointment of a Brazilian national to that post is a renewed source of hope for us. In conclusion, I can assure those present that they have our gratitude.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.